

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Public Reprimand)
)
of the Educator's Certificate of) CONSENT ORDER OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND
)
Mary Gale Pennscott)
)
Certificate #105096)

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on February 11, 2003. On September 5, 2002, the State Department of Education (Department) sent a notice of the possible suspension or revocation of her South Carolina Educator's Certificate (certificate) to Ms. Mary Gale Pennscott by certified mail, restricted delivery, and return receipt requested. Ms. Pennscott received this notice as evidenced by a signed postal receipt and initially requested a hearing. Subsequent to this request, Ms. Pennscott, through her attorney, Dona L. Guffey, Esquire, proposed to resolve this matter without a hearing by agreeing to the following terms: (1) a public reprimand will be issued by the State Board, (2) she agrees that this public reprimand will be reported to all school districts in South Carolina with the grounds listed as "unprofessional conduct," and (3) this order will be maintained as a public record in the Office of General Counsel of the Department. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted issue a Consent Order of Public Reprimand on the terms set forth above.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Pennscott holds a valid South Carolina certificate, and has over eighteen years of teaching experience. During the 2001-2002 school year, Ms. Pennscott was a social studies teacher at Seneca High School in the Oconee County School District (District). She taught in the District from 2000-2002. She resigned on February 27, 2002, following an investigation by the District into allegations that she made inappropriate comments towards and in the presence of students. The District interviewed students in her classes. Many of the students interviewed alleged that Ms. Pennscott made inappropriate comments to them or in their presence. Ms. Pennscott denied that she made any inappropriate comments. She has relocated to the state of Washington and has no current plans to return to South Carolina. She has agreed to accept this reprimand on the conditions outlined above.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-150 {1990}, S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-160 (1990); 24 .Code Ann. Regs. 43-58. The Board finds that the preponderance of the evidence presented supports its conclusion that just cause does not exist to suspend or revoke Ms. Pennscott's certificate; however, cause does exist for a Public Reprimand of Ms. Pennscott's conduct. Accordingly, the Board issues this Consent Order of Public Reprimand as set forth above.

South Carolina State Board of Education

/S/ Greg Killian
Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
February 11, 2 003

I, Mary Gale Pennscott, SC Teaching Certificate # 105096, do hereby agree to this Order of Public Reprimand consisting of two pages, and understand that this Order will be presented as signed to the State Board of Education on Tuesday, February 11, 2003

1/30/03

/S/ Mary Gale Pennscott